

Plaited Clay

by RINA PELEG

ALMOST EVERYWHERE one walks through an Israeli kibbutz one practically stumbles over pottery shards that are sometimes the only evidence of previous Middle Eastern cultures. First acquainted with ceramics through these fragments, working with clay became a way to make contact with the world outside the kibbutz and, ultimately, outside Israel. While studying ceramics at Alfred University, New York, I explored coiling vessels and decided to try "weaving" with grogless plastic clay.

With about sixteen extruded coils (each 36 inches in length), the warp for a circular basket was laid over two pieces of canvas or cotton cloth in a concave plaster mold. Several dies were employed to extrude a variety of coils. To form round coils, extruded clay was rolled on a table. The warp coils, meeting at the bottom center, were secured with a woven horizontal coil. One to three more of these at a time were then plaited with the warp; double-walled baskets were made by adding another layer of warp and weaving the two plaited walls together at the

lip. Made without a mold, square baskets were begun with longer warp coils, adjusted when necessary with additional clay. Patterns were developed in the baskets utilizing various plaiting techniques and incorporating following clay bodies:

White Porcelain Body (Cone 6, oxidation or reduction)

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Talc | 3.0 |
| Custer Feldspar | 11.0 |
| Nepheline Syenite | 9.0 |
| Ball Clay | 5.0 |
| Georgia Kaolin | 17.0 |
| Kaolin (6 Tile Clay) | 34.0 |
| Flint | 17.0 |
| | <u>100.0</u> |

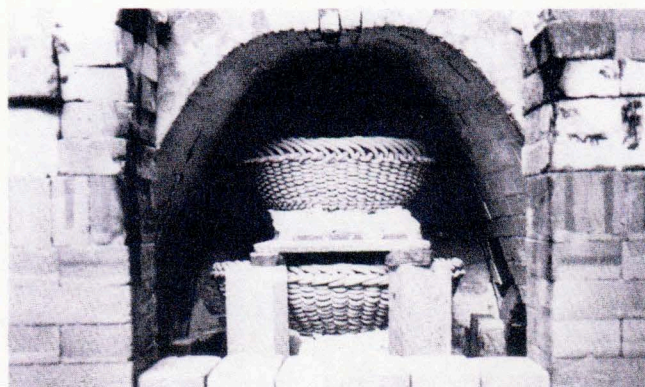
Black Clay Body (Cone 4, oxidation or reduction)

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Barnard Slip | 13.0 |
| Earthenware Clay | 13.0 |
| Ocmulgee Red Clay | 13.0 |
| PBX Fireclay | 40.0 |
| Wollastonite | 20.0 |
| | <u>100.0</u> |

Add: Black Iron Oxide 4.0
 Iron Chromate 4.0
 Manganese Dioxide 10.0



The author's clay baskets were plaited (intertwined or braided) from extruded coils and slats.



Two baskets await reduction firing in a catenary arch kiln; Kaowool lends support against slumping.





ve Rounded baskets are plaited in a concave mold; this is a stronger warp and often replaces clay.

Below Rina's studio at Alfred University, with clay baskets in various stages of completion.

